

**HANOVER COUNTY  
BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
MINUTES  
March 22, 2016**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Dibble, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

Board Members present: Bernadette Cornelius, Sheila Crossen-Powell, Sue Dibble, Faye Prichard, Robert "Rick" Richardson (4:50 p.m.) and Page Sening.

Also in attendance: Jim Taylor, Deputy County Administrator; Dennis Walter, Deputy County Attorney; Tamara Temoney, Assistant Director; Ivy Sager, Executive Director – CSB; Marc René, Division Director, Human Services Business Operations (BOT); Jacque Althizer, Budget Management Analyst Senior; Ginny Ferguson, Quality Assurance Coordinator; Daricka Jackson, Program Coordinator II; Maresa Stockton, Benefit Programs Specialist and Robin Riley, Administrative Assistant.

Guests: CSB Board and staff members.

Absent: Robert Barnette; Larry Huber; Victoria Hutto

**II. CITIZENS' COMMENT PERIOD**

No comments presented.

**III. INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF**

Ms. Jackson introduced Ms. Stockton, Benefit Programs Specialist, formerly with Petersburg DSS.

DSS and CSB Board members and staff introduced themselves.

**IV. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 26, 2016 BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Ms. Sening moved to approve the January 26, 2016 Board Meeting Minutes. Ms. Cornelius seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

**V. PRESENTATION: STATE OF THE AGENCY**

*(copy of PowerPoint sent to SSAB members 3-23-16)*

Dr. Crossen-Powell presented the FY 2015 end-of-year report. The State fiscal year begins June 1<sup>st</sup> and County fiscal year begins July 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Harris requested a comparison with counties similar to Hanover.

**Benefit Program Performance:**

- Medicaid Reviews Timely: HDSS is meeting most of the State standards except for Medicaid reviews timely. There have been some performance issues with staff and sometimes, reviews are lost and already late when received in Hanover.
- TANF-VIEW: The standard for TANF-VIEW participants employed is 50% and Hanover is at 66.7%. The department only has two workers in that unit. If a client is receiving TANF, they must participate in VIEW unless exempt for having a child under one year, if they or the child(ren) are disabled or if the client is the primary caretaker of an elderly family member. Dr. Temoney supervises this department. A State grant was received to cover clients' requests for assistance with transportation which is the biggest expense. HDSS typically provides gas cards. The agency can help with work clothing, shelter costs and sometimes assist with the purchase of a used vehicle.
- SNAP (food stamps): The recipient number has come down about 1,000 since FY 2011 although it is still at almost 8,000.
- TANF (cash assistance): This program has had a major drop in the number of recipients, a significant decrease of 43% since FY 2011.
- New Benefit Program Customers: The number of new benefit program customers information is reported at the request of Mr. Harris. This count is done manually. Ms. Cornelius asked if these were customers new to Virginia and Dr. Crossen-Powell said there is no system to check other states.
- Energy Assistance (heating and cooling): These numbers also continue to come down. The benefits used to be more generous but the funding continues to decrease. For the cooling program, customers could only receive assistance of \$100. To qualify for the cooling program, a person must be elderly (over 60), disabled or have children in the home under six years old. The heating program (LIHEAP) is income based, and applications are automatically mailed by the State to persons who received assistance the previous year. For this program, no payment is sent until the program is closed. The State then divides the money and sends to vendors. Crisis assistance is available only for heating equipment repair through January 1<sup>st</sup>. After that date, customers can apply for crisis assistance for heating bills.

**Services Performance:**

- Congregate Care: This is any residential or group home placement. Sometimes, having only a few children in congregate care can skew the figures with a smaller agency. There are currently only two children in residential placements. Nine children are on trial home visits.
- CPS Ongoing Contacts: There were vacancies within the unit for almost a year. Workers are required to make face-to-face visits with every adult and child in the home; however, some of the adults may no longer be in the home and have to be closed out of the system. If they are not, it will show as no contact.  
CPS continues to receive complaints. For a complaint to be valid, it must meet the following criteria:
  - child must be under 18
  - abuse/neglect caused by a caretaker
  - incident must have occurred within the jurisdiction
  - must meet the State definition of abuse/neglectThere are two parts to a case: Family Assessment where the allegation is not deemed to be severe and the person can refuse services and ask the worker to leave; Investigation permitted by the Code of Virginia if the allegation of abuse/neglect is serious.
- Adult Protective Services: Assistance can be refused unless the adult is incapacitated. Investigations are made into reports of financial exploitation and/or elder abuse and neglect (whether by self or others).
- Adult Services: Reports do not meet the definition of APS. For assisted living and nursing homes, a UAI has to be done to assess/reassess qualification for these facilities. The State decided to contract the DSS part of the UAIs but could not find anyone to do them; there was no response to the RFP. DSS will continue to assist the Health Department with UAIs.
- Foster Care: A sizeable number of children in foster care are older teenagers with a criminal history who come to DSS from the courts or whose parents have petitioned the courts for relief of custody.
- Child Care: There are 287 children in the child care program, 66% of whom are fee-based where the parent(s) pay a portion of the fee to the provider. If a client is in the VIEW program or receives TANF and is working or in school, their children are eligible for child care unless the family is over income limits. There is a waiting list for child care because there is only a certain allotment from the State for this program. Ms. Prichard asked about the term “unduplicated” – children only counted once in the data.

**Other:**

- There has been a significant increase in the number of applications filed on line. Contacts with benefit clients used to be face to face and 88% of contact is now over the phone. Clients cannot use a cell phone to apply for benefits on line but DSS has computer kiosks in the lobby with staff available to assist. Ms. Cornelius asked about fraud. HDSS recovered more money in FY 15 than any other locality except Chesterfield and the City of Richmond. Those agencies have entire units of staff for fraud investigation where Hanover DSS has only one Fraud Investigator. He has a good relationship with and has received nice comments from the Ashland Police Department, Hanover County Sheriff's Office and the Commonwealth Attorney's Office. Cases can only be prosecuted if they are over \$5,000, and recoveries are then returned to the State.
- Customer Volume: HDSS still receives a lot of switchboard calls, approximately 24,000 per year. The front desk traffic is a little over 15,000 walk-ins per year. Clients are usually dropping off or picking up documents.
- Looking Ahead: The State is moving toward an automated system – VACMS. Child care is already in the system and the SNAP pilot begins next month. VACMS is unable to handle numerous applications. The food assistance “ABAWD” (Able Bodied Adults without Dependents) requirement has impacted clients in that they can now only receive SNAP for three months if they are in this category. After that time, they must be employed to receive the benefit if they meet the income requirements.
- The OASIS program, which populates Safe Measures, is not always accurate.
- Four staff members are trained to facilitate family partnership meetings.
- Despite heavy caseloads, there is no additional staff to meet increasing needs.
- Follow up to sequestration: Last week, the House passed a bill to eliminate the Social Services Block Grant which is used to fund CPS and other programs. If not vetoed, this will have a major impact on services that DSS provides.

Ms. Dibble thanked Dr. Crossen-Powell for the information.

**VI. APRIL IS OFFICE SERVICES SUPPORT EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION MONTH**

*Recognition Letter from the Board to Office Services Support (OSS) Employees*

Ms. Dibble read the letter to be presented to the OSS staff members. The Board approved the letter recognizing April as Office Services Support Employee Appreciation Month. Ms. Dibble signed the letter as Acting Chair.

**VII. LOCAL CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION PLAN: ACTION NEEDED: RECOMMENDATION THAT FY 17 PLAN BE APPROVED**

Dr. Crossen-Powell said that each year, HDSS is required to complete a Class and Comp plan and submit to the State. The signed Plan is due to VDSS-HR by April 29<sup>th</sup> which is why it is being presented for approval at this Board meeting. The SSAB does not meet again until May 24, 2016. There are minor changes from last year which have been reviewed and updated. The Plan has been sent to Ms. Lawson, Director of Human Resources, and she will review after the Board of Supervisors' meeting in April. Mr. Taylor said the State is requesting a 3% salary increase for employees; however, DSS follows the County's pay and benefit plans. The County is proposing a 2% increase.

Ms. Prichard moved that the FY 17 Local Classification and Compensation Plan for be approved. Ms. Cornelius seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

**VIII. BUDGET UPDATE**

Ms. Althizer distributed a chart comparing FY 16 at February month end to FY 15 February month end. There have been no major expenditure changes. Administration and Programs are 85% federal and 15% local which will last most of the fiscal year, then go to pass-through which is 75% local and 25% federal. The Benefits worker stationed at the hospital is funded by the State DMAS and the hospital. Out of a \$5 million budget, the high-dollar lines are IV-E foster care and adoption assistance. The local review team for the State reports no findings to date.

## **IX. HANOVER DSS SCORECARD**

Ms. Ferguson, Quality Assurance Coordinator, introduced herself. The March dashboard is for January data. There is a lag time with the State in posting information. For benefit programs, the delay is about a month and for services programs, about six weeks. Data is pulled from about 15 different systems and some numbers are done manually. Ms. Ferguson explained the values and measurements and discussed the comparative data on the various charts. Dr. Crossen-Powell said the reason the State average is included is that Mr. Harris said HDSS should be able to do at least as well as the State. State standards have not changed in 5-6 years. The Central Region Director wants to replicate the dashboard for 25 other localities and Ms. Ferguson offered to assist with this project.

### Benefits – Performance Indicators Measurement Report

Benefit Programs Specialists work all types of cases and most measures are at 100%. Ms. Jackson said that workers have to do everything in the VACMS system and there are many errors by the system. Tickets have to be submitted which affect the statistics. The VIEW information indicates how many are employed as well as how many are employed and stay employed (job retention rate).

### Services – Critical Outcomes Report

This information is from a system of data warehousing called Safe Measures and covers three areas: Transformation, CFSR and Safety. Under Transformation, the agency tries to move children out of residential (congregate) care. CFSR covers permanency, reunification, adoption and stability. Safety (Child Protective Services) outcomes are all above standard.

## **XI. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

- Staff members continue to work with the Ashland faith-based community's efforts to assist families living in motels. Meetings have been held with several churches (Duncan Memorial-Circles and The Way) to explain benefit programs and advise what benefits are available. Ms. Prichard said the Town of Ashland passed an ordinance effective July 1, 2016, when children are not in school, which limits the time people can live in motels. Ms. Prichard said there are complicated issues with the State Department of Health as people are living in uninspected rooms with health hazards and some are living in deplorable conditions. Mr. Taylor said the faith community has raised money to hire a case manager and the County will provide office space. Priorities will be for families with children. Ms. Prichard said there needs to be better communication between faith-based organizations. Ms. Cornelius said communication about resources is also needed.

- There were no findings from the Random Moment Sampling audit.
- The VDSS conducted its Child and Family Services review at the beginning of March. The results are expected to be available within the next 45-60 days. The State is doing a pre-review prior to the federal review of CPS and foster care cases.
- The Assistant Director arranged a series of management coaching / training meetings for supervisors and managers.
- Information on fraud collections was received from VDSS. Only Richmond City and Chesterfield have collected more funds this fiscal year, and Chesterfield's collections were only \$2,000 more than Hanover's. Only Richmond had higher SNAP recoveries. HDSS has one Fraud Investigator while other, larger localities have entire Fraud units. HDSS's Fraud Investigator does a great job.
- The Director attended several VLSSE Child and Family Services committee meetings and the VDSS Permanency committee meeting.
- The Assistant Director attended Child Care training. She also attended the VLSSE's Board meeting, Legislative Committee meeting and the State and Local Advisory (SLAT) Committee meeting.
- Staff members attended the Smart Beginnings meeting and are working with HECC to provide bags with information for Kindergarten registration. The goal is to get as many children as possible registered on the same day – April 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Two homeless persons were identified during Homeward's Point-in-Time count.
- FEMA conducted a simulation of a radiological exercise in which staff participated.
- The Agency received an allotment of \$9,000 from Energy Share. Allotments are received as Energy Share raises money, and the funds are usually expended in 2-3 weeks.
- The Quality Assurance Network statewide meeting and The Learning Collaborative's Data workgroup were hosted by HDSS and attended by Ms. Ferguson.
- Staff members attended Hanover Early Childhood Council meetings and Diversity and Ethics/Fraud training.
- Three additional scanners have been requested from VDSS as the Agency moves toward a more paperless office. LaserFiche training has been held.
- The Leadership Team met with the Central Region's Director to conduct the annual review of performance and the performance of the program specialists under his supervision. There are five regions in the state with 120 local departments of social services.
- There are nine foster care children on trial home visits and only two in residential placements which is a major improvement. There are currently 29 children in foster care.
- HDSS hosted a Human Services' Strategic Plan: Caring Hanover meeting and data is being reviewed.

- The EITC/MetroCash program has been going on for seven weeks and will be held through April 12<sup>th</sup>. 97 returns have been completed and 38 returns have been eligible for EITC tax credits totaling \$42,441. Federal refunds have totaled \$125,572 and State refunds \$22,658 to date. MetroCash is a nationally recognized United Way program. Volunteers are CPAs, DSS staff some County employees.

Ms. Prichard asked if DSS has had any dealings with constituents affected by payday lending. Ms. Ferguson said the only information has been anecdotal. Ms. Jackson said there are no benefit programs to assist with that situation. Ms. Prichard asked to be informed if any data becomes available.

## **XII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. by Ms. Dibble.

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Robert Barnette, Chair

*Next meeting: Tuesday, May 24, 2016; 3:30 p.m.*

Following the SSAB meeting, a panel discussion about the services available through DSS and CSB and functions of the Boards was presented by Dr. Crossen-Powell and Ms. Sager. Members of the SSAB and DSS staff were invited to attend the CSB Administrative Board meeting following the discussion. Dr. Richardson, Ms. Prichard, Ms. Cornelius, Ms. Sening, Dr. Crossen-Powell, Dr. Temoney, Ms. Jackson, Ms. Ferguson, Ms. Althizer and Ms. Riley attended.